

# The State of the National Security State

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The 1947 National Security Act established the basis for the American national security state in the Cold War. The fundamental framework of that state still exists over a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Should it continue, particularly in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks? If not, why not, and how should it be altered?

The purpose of this article is to set the stage for answering these questions. Two themes dominate. The first involves the proper mix of change and continuity, a key concern in a transitional period. This theme is examined against the backdrop of three interconnected aspects of American history since 1945: core US national interests; the concept of US national security and its foreign and domestic components envisioned as serving those interests; and the US grand strategy designed to support the concept of national security. The second theme is on the form and function of government: How well since the onset of the Cold War has the form of US government functioned in order to meet the requirements of US grand strategy designed to further America's core interests?

## *The Cold War*

### *National Interests and National Security*

Lord Palmerston described core national interests in 1848 as the “eternal” and ultimate justification for national policy.<sup>1</sup> The United States has three such interests: physical security, promotion of values, and economic prosperity.<sup>2</sup> Physical security entails protecting the territory and people of a nation-state against attack in order to ensure survival with fundamental values and institutions intact. It was the core interest most often associated in the early decades of the republic with the concept of national security. James Madison referred in *The Federalist* to “security against foreign danger” as the primary reason for shifting power to the central government.<sup>3</sup> In the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of

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national security came to include the other two core interests as well—promotion of values and economic prosperity.<sup>4</sup>

During and after World War II, US leaders expanded the concept of national security and used its terminology for the first time to explain America's relationship to the world. For most of US history, the physical security of the continental United States had not been in jeopardy. But by 1945, this invulnerability was rapidly diminishing with the advent of long-range bombers, atom bombs, and ballistic missiles. A general perception grew that the future would not allow time to mobilize, that preparation would have to become constant. For the first time, American leaders would have to deal with the essential paradox of national security faced by the Roman Empire and subsequent great powers: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*—If you want peace, prepare for war.

Allied to the concept of preparedness was the emerging idea that national security required all elements of national power, not just the military, to be addressed in peace as well as war. "We are in a different league now," *Life* magazine proclaimed in 1945. "How large the subject of security has grown, larger than a combined Army and Navy."<sup>5</sup> A year later this was echoed by Ferdinand Eberstadt, a key architect of the emerging institutional changes in Washington, who observed that most policymakers dealing with national security believed "that foreign policy, military, and domestic economic resources should be closely tied together."<sup>6</sup> This linkage of national security to so many interdependent factors, whether political and economic or psychological and military, expanded the concept, with the subjective boundaries of security pushed out further into the world, encompassing more geography and thereby more issues and problems. In this context, developments anywhere could be perceived to have an automatic and direct impact on US core interests. By 1948, President Truman was applying to the entire world the words directed in earlier times to the Western Hemisphere: "The loss of independence by any nation adds directly to the insecurity of the United States and all free nations."<sup>7</sup>

This expansive concept of US national security led increasingly to the dominance of military-security concerns and a transcendent military establishment. A major factor was the Soviet military buildup. The 1949 Soviet explosion of a nuclear device reinforced the image of an external threat. Equally important,

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the Soviet detonation supported the key argument made the next year in NSC-68 that the US nuclear capability had been neutralized and that there was a resultant need to drastically expand standing conventional forces. The Korean War appeared to bear out the assumptions of NSC-68. The result was a massive military increase with the expectation of an indefinite period of intense danger to US national security. Whereas the military budget for FY 1950 had accounted for less than one-third of government expenditures and less than 5 percent of GNP, by FY 1953 that budget represented more than 60 percent of government outlays and more than 12 percent of GNP.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the rise of McCarthyism made it difficult to question the need for a national security establishment focused on a virtual state of war in peacetime. The Soviet Union, as Colin Gray has pointed out, became the all-consuming focus of US national security:

The capabilities, declarations, and actions that comprised US national security policy made sense only with reference to the Soviet threat. That threat, as variously defined over the years, was not *a* factor helping to define the purposes of US policy, grand strategy, and military strategy. It was *the* factor.<sup>9</sup>

A kind of adverse synergism linked the more expansive concept of US national security to Soviet-American relations. At the same time, the ambiguity of the new term “national security” helped create a means for politicians and officials to bridge the gap between domestic and foreign policy. The result was a concept of national security, as Daniel Yergin has observed, that fundamentally revised America’s perception of its relationship to the rest of the world.

The nation was to be permanently prepared. America’s interests and responsibilities were unrestricted and global. National security became a guiding rule. . . . It lay at the heart of a new and sometimes intoxicating vision.<sup>10</sup>

### *Grand Strategy*

US grand strategy involves the use of national power in peace and war to further a strategic vision of America’s role in the world that will best achieve the nation’s three core interests.<sup>11</sup> Out of the post-1945 vision of national security emerged a grand strategic consensus for US global involvement to contain the Soviet Union on the Eurasian landmass. This consensus survived arguments over whether the resultant policy should be particularist or universalist and whether the primary threat was the ideological menace of communism or the geopolitical form of the Soviet great power. Even the Vietnam War could not break the consensus, producing traumatic questions on the wisdom of that intervention but not of containment. There was, however, a price to pay for the consensus. The ability of each administration to remain in office after 1945 became dependent on reducing the tension between the foreign and domestic components of US national security, a tension increasingly exacerbated by the requirements of containment. The application of national ways and means to implement grand strategy during the Cold War fell into two distinct patterns—cost minimization and risk minimization. Stra-

tegic actions designed to minimize cost tend to escalate risks, while those aimed at minimizing risks tend to drive up costs. The alternation between these two patterns had profound social, political, economic, and military implications.<sup>12</sup>

The cost-minimization approach to containment was favored by George Kennan because it allowed the United States to choose not only the time and place of responding, but the appropriate elements of power as well. The basic requirement of the strategy was to distinguish between vital and peripheral interests. At the heart of this approach was Kennan's belief that any attempt to generate enough means to meet all possible threats in implementing the grand strategy could bankrupt the country or at the very least have seriously adverse societal impacts.<sup>13</sup>

The Truman Administration officially promulgated the strategy of containment in the March 1947 Truman Doctrine. But despite the apparent open-ended, global commitment implicit in that strategy, that Administration quickly adopted the cost-minimizing pattern of implementation. The basic problem with the pattern, however, as Korea and Vietnam would prove, was that the strategic premise of making rational distinctions between vital and peripheral interests did not take into consideration psychological insecurities, always a problem in an open, pluralistic democracy. Losses of peripheral areas to Soviet domination might be psychologically damaging in more vital ones. For such scenarios, minimizing costs appeared to add the possible loss of deterrent credibility to the concomitant increase in risk. These insecurities, as John Lewis Gaddis has pointed out, "could as easily develop from the distant sound of falling dominoes as from the rattling of sabres next door."<sup>14</sup>

The second pattern of strategic ways and means—risk minimization—also emerged in the Truman years, outlined in NSC-68. That document officially enshrined the strategic objective of containing the expansion of the Soviet Union for an indefinite period until the Kremlin "[modified] its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards."<sup>15</sup> NSC-68 outlined a risk-minimizing strategy based on the fundamental assumption that the United States could generate enough means to defend its interests wherever they existed. Accordingly, there was no need to differentiate those interests that were vital from those that were not. But as risks were lowered, the costs inevitably increased. Additionally, the decision to respond wherever aggression occurred placed the United States in a reactive mode, leaving it to potential adversaries to determine how and under what circumstances American resources would be expended. When the Korean War dragged on, public frustration mounted. With the prospect of indefinitely high expenditures of men and materiel for a type of conflict alien to American tradition, this public frustration began to erode the authority of the Truman Administration to pursue its approach to grand strategy.

The Eisenhower-Dulles "New Look" was a cost-minimizing reaction to the risk-minimizing strategy of the last years of the Truman Administration. Eisenhower also believed it was the only way to achieve balanced national security focused on all three core national interests. Like Kennan, he perceived that any

attempt to generate enough means to protect undifferentiated interests against all possible threats would require a degree of fiscal austerity that would alter American society—that any attempt at absolute risk-free security might destroy what the United States was trying to achieve. For Eisenhower, ever conscious of the tension between foreign and domestic policy, national security and economic stability went hand in hand. He believed that if the American public perceived the cost of internationalism as indefinite national sacrifice, the result would be isolationism. No one more eloquently than this former soldier tied together the domestic and foreign implications of the national security state as it emerged in the long twilight war:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. . . . The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.<sup>16</sup>

Subsequent approaches to containment oscillated between the two patterns of cost-minimizing and risk-minimizing. These shifts reflected public perceptions of how well each administration balanced the domestic and foreign elements of national security policy while realizing the grand strategic objective of containment. Even when risk minimization required active peacetime forces larger than the United States had ever before maintained, they were not so large or costly as they might have been. Reliance on nuclear weapons caused military planners to be comfortable with lesser conventional capabilities than they might otherwise have been willing to accept. And perceived technological advantages in conventional weapons meant the United States didn't have to match the Soviets plane for plane and tank for tank.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Form and Function*

After 1945, the form of the US government adjusted to the functions required by the changing concept of national security. The American experience in World War II had indicated that institutions designed for an old era would not be adequate for the new. Postwar hearings on the Pearl Harbor disaster concluded that US intelligence procedures were insufficient for modern-day security challenges, particularly with the new American status as a global power. Another legacy of the war was the Joint Chiefs of Staff, an ad hoc wartime creation designed to provide some unity of advice to the President and to act as a counterweight in dealings with a similar institution long used by the British. Not only did the Joint Chiefs still lack formal authorization after World War II, but there was also increased pressure for a major reorganization that would make the air force independent and unify the armed services.

To counter the unification momentum, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal called on Ferdinand Eberstadt, a pioneer in Wall Street mutual fund activities and a close friend, to chair a committee on the postwar organization for national security. The Eberstadt Report of September 1945 emphasized “a complete realignment of our governmental organization” to prepare the United States for “waging peace as well as war.” The focus was on adversarial collaboration: “Separate departments provide a greater representation of specialized knowledge, they provide a greater aggregation of experienced judgment and insure representation of varying viewpoints.” A “Council of Common Defense,” later renamed the National Security Council (NSC), would allow top-level advisers in the Executive Branch to continually exchange information and opinions and to coordinate the formulation of national security policy. The report also recommended the formal establishment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a National Security Resource Board to link industrial readiness with military preparedness. Finally, Eberstadt and his committee called for a central intelligence agency focused only on foreign threats and three coordinate—not unified—services, each headed by a civilian.<sup>18</sup>

The Eberstadt Report became the framework for the National Security Act of 1947. The legislation represented a series of compromises within the Executive Branch and between that branch and Congress, all of which delayed the full linkage of government form and function. Prior to the National Security Act, the unification controversy had helped to stimulate the expression of an enlarged concept of national security. After 1947, the controversy initially held back a more forceful expression of America’s immense power. Increasingly, debates by the services took on the form of theologians’ disputes concerning holy texts and strengthened the tendency of each service to create its own defense policy. The result was that the initial creation of grand strategy to meet evolving national security needs after World War II took form much faster than US defense policy.<sup>19</sup>

As national security became increasingly defined in military terms, there was a growing militarization of the American government and an increase of presidential and Executive Branch power normally associated with wartime. In the wake of the Korean conflict, the State Department shifted its focus more and more to military security.<sup>20</sup> A similar structural and organizational reorientation took place at the White House, primarily through the development of the NSC. In the early Truman years, that organization was merely one part of the Executive Office of the President, sparingly used by the Chief Executive. After 1950, the NSC became the government’s principal steering mechanism, with real decisionmaking invariably involving the Assistants to the President for National Security Affairs. That post increased exponentially in importance during the Kennedy Administration, reaching new peaks in the Nixon and Carter years when the National Security Advisers often brushed aside the Secretaries of State. By the end of the Cold War, the business hours of Presidents were occupied primarily with the problems vetted and brought to them through the NSC system. In fact, as Ernest May has pointed out, by that time “the main business of the United



States government had become the development, maintenance, positioning, exploitation, and regulation of military forces.”<sup>21</sup>

This militarization of the government meant that by the 1950s, with the exception of the Secretary of the Treasury, the heads of domestic agencies had become second-tier officials. The dominant positions in Washington included the heads of the State Department, the Defense Department, and the Central Intelligence Agency, as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the President’s National Security Adviser. At the same time, the 1949 amendment to the National Security Act began a series of evolutionary changes that would culminate in the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act with an emphasis on centralized, accountable authority and joint unified commands that was far removed from the original Eberstadt structure.

With the military focus on national security, the US public came to accept a mix of real and potential infringements on its civil liberties. There were also domestic costs in the effects of the twilight war on government programs ranging from the Fair Deal and the New Frontier to the Great Society. And yet no “garrison state” emerged, due primarily to the inclusion of nuclear deterrence as part of the grand strategy and to the consequent abandonment of attempts to keep all relevant sectors of the economy fine-tuned for mobilization and war.

All in all, the evolving form of the US government after the National Security Act of 1947 was a creative, military-focused response to the evolving Cold War concept of national security set against a backdrop of Soviet militarism, global reliance on the United States, and dizzying developments in nuclear and other military technologies. In achieving the grand strategic function of containing the USSR, the US national security state grew, at least in part, in pace with the Soviet “total security state.” Yet those factors sometimes cited as contributing to US weakness as a nation actually curbed the power of the national security state: Despite a compelling external threat, the openness of American political institutions to pressures from interest groups and the nature of national ideology worked together to restrain the power of the government over the society and the economy. On the other hand, the often-cited strength of the Soviet state inherent in its ability to mobilize societal means for external objectives appears to have been the long-term reason for its demise.<sup>22</sup>

## ***After the Cold War***

### *National Interests and National Security*

The end of the Cold War required the United States to think more deeply about the concept of national security than had been required for two generations. The core interests remained the preservation of the United States as a free, economically prosperous nation with its fundamental institutions and values intact. But forces and trends were in train that would drastically complicate the concept. Revolutions in technology, communications, information, and trans-



portation altered the place of time and distance in the consideration of fundamental US interests. These revolutions fueled a growing global interdependence, particularly regarding economics and the environment. At the same time, a multi-centric world of transnational actors ranging from multinational corporations to terrorist groups began to emerge and challenge the primacy of the state-centric international structure.

Nevertheless, the physical security of the United States was still perceived in Cold War globalist terms, focused on foreign national threats. Meanwhile, the US promotion of democracy and American values worldwide, facilitated by communication advances, was linked to free trade, American economic prosperity, global stability, and thereby US national security.

The demise of the Soviet Union diminished the Cold War linkage of homeland defense with national security. Compounding this development, American administrations after the Cold War continued to associate national security with the use of military forces overseas. For the Clinton Administration, this took the form of more indiscriminate global military applications across a wide operational spectrum, including nation-building and refugee control as well as major theater war. For the Bush Administration, the focus initially centered on threats abroad to vital US interests, particularly in the form of a possible collapse of Russian power or a growth in the military and economic power of China.<sup>23</sup>

By 2001, however, there were numerous signs of future adjustments that would have to be made in the concept of US national security. In December 1997, the National Defense Panel warned of a growing terrorist threat against the United States.<sup>24</sup> This was underscored in the September 1999 Phase I and April 2000 Phase II reports of the US Commission on National Security in the 21st Century, which focused in part on mass-casualty terrorism directed against the US homeland as an increasingly likely threat. The Commission's final Phase III report in March 2001 emphasized the need to modify the concept of national security that had evolved since World War II. "We have taken a broad view of national security," the Commission concluded. "In the new era, sharp distinctions between 'foreign' and 'domestic' no longer apply. We do not equate national security with 'defense.'"<sup>25</sup>

The events of 11 September 2001 confirmed this broader view. Suddenly, with the force of a Pearl Harbor, the direct linkage of the American homeland to US national security returned. The result is a national sense of anxiety, uncertainty, and vulnerability similar to that of the early years of the Cold War. As in those years, the American public is coming to realize that a global war on terrorism will require a state of constant mobilization and readiness for a protracted Orwellian conflict in which war and peace are virtually indistinguishable. Nevertheless, the question remains whether the United States, as it did in the late 1940s, can fashion a confluence of political, structural, military, and technological changes supported by a widely accepted grand strategy. It will not be easy. During the Cold War, core US national security interests for the most part com-

plemented each other. That, as Richard Betts presciently warned in 1998, is no longer necessarily the case in the age of globalism:

The interest at the very core—protecting the American Homeland from attack—may now often be in conflict with security more broadly conceived and with the interests that mandate promoting American political values, economic interdependence, social Westernization, and stability in regions beyond Western Europe and the Americas.<sup>26</sup>

### *Grand Strategy*

For a decade after the end of the Cold War, US grand strategy continued to be basically one of global engagement because of the continued conviction that security at both ends of the Eurasian landmass provided a stable world order in which the symbiotic relationship between liberal values and an open world economy could continue to flourish in support of US national security. During that decade, in the absence of an overriding ideological and military threat, the United States added commitments to the Balkans, Central Europe, and the Persian Gulf in what one team of analysts termed an “uneasy amalgam” of selective engagement, cooperative security, and primacy.<sup>27</sup> The terrorist attacks of 9/11 demonstrated the hostility that had developed toward this mixed grand strategic approach.<sup>28</sup>

Those events also indicated a potential for the strategy of isolationism to reemerge. It is a vision that still resonates despite a half century of worldwide engagement, particularly in its conception of a remote and powerful America that can withdraw from dangerous and corrupting global influences. More terrorist attacks on the US homeland, particularly of a catastrophic nature, could enhance this outlook if the American people focus on the paradoxical fact that US global involvement designed to promote world order and international stability is the principal cause for such attacks. A similar paradox existed in the Cold War with the advent of Soviet nuclear weapons, strategic bombers, and missiles: there was always the danger that US strategic engagement in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia might lead to nuclear strikes on the US homeland. The foundation for that Cold War engagement, however, was the direct link between the stability of those regions and the survival of the United States—a consensus, briefly attenuated by Vietnam, that in order to maintain homeland security, it was necessary to confront foreign problems early on in an extended defense perimeter far from American shores. That forward presence and intervention in troubled regions now tend to create animosities which, as demonstrated on 9/11, can redound to harm the American homeland.<sup>29</sup>

To counter isolationist tendencies, a new US grand strategy will have to resolve two problems carried over from the Cold War. The first is the core versus periphery issue. Core proponents like Kennan argued in terms of cost minimization that the United States should be only selectively engaged, where American vital interests are at stake. To the contrary, Paul Nitze and the so-called universalist proponents who created NSC-68 argued in terms of risk-minimization that local

conflicts on the periphery are important because of their linkage to the broader grand strategy of containment. “In a shrinking world, which now faces the threat of atomic warfare,” NSC-68 concluded, “it is not an adequate objective merely to seek to check the Kremlin design, for the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable.”<sup>30</sup> This idea of world order as an end in itself has become more appealing since 9/11. Failed states are no longer seen as just humanitarian concerns, but as long-term breeding and training grounds for terrorists. Such states as well as protracted civil conflicts over issues like Palestine and Kashmir are increasingly perceived as directly linked to core American security interests, involving risks to the US homeland that are viewed as just as dangerous as a nuclear strike in the Cold War—and more likely. Consequently, any grand strategy that hopes to sustain American public support for a global war on terrorism will have to emphasize the risk-minimization strategic vision of protracted global involvement.<sup>31</sup>

This approach leads, as it did in the wake of NSC-68, to the problem of cost. In the Cold War, the development of nuclear weapons helped soften the public impression that a risk-minimization strategy would entail higher costs. There is no such buffer after 9/11. If costs for a global war on terrorism are to be held to a level acceptable for American public support, a multilateral approach will have to dominate American grand strategy. In any event, an effective unilateral war on terrorism is just not possible. Combating international terrorism requires allied military and police forces operating within their national borders focused on transnational law enforcement ranging from the tracing of bank accounts to the sharing of information on criminal organizations. Equally important, coalitions can provide legitimizing power to emphasize the enormous gap between the worlds of democratic societies and the terrorist criminal underground, thereby reducing the ability of terrorist groups to emphasize grievances against a narrow, self-aggrandizing America focused only on its own national interests. At the same time, the prospect of catastrophic terrorist attacks justifies a certain degree of unilateral action, as was demonstrated in the Afghanistan War, particularly if there are obvious global benefits as there were in the British Navy’s efforts to reduce international piracy well before the signing of international conventions to that effect in the mid-19th century. In the Cold War, there were also times when the United States found it both necessary and desirable to strike out alone; but then, as now in the global war on terrorism, the United States discovered that it cannot win on its own.<sup>32</sup>

The multilateral approach is just one of several characteristics required for a grand strategy in an age of terror. To begin with, a grand strategic vision must manage public expectations. Crisis and consequence management must be tied to deterrence in order to prevent the acknowledgment of inevitable terrorist attacks on the US homeland from slipping into national resignation. This will not be helped by the current call for a “war” against terrorism—a term that not only elevates the status of common criminals, but raises expectations for decisive

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military action against an easily identifiable foe, creating the impression that the primary US effort will be military. All this is reminiscent of the type of militarization that occurred in the Cold War when some efforts, notably in Vietnam, weakened nonmilitary elements of national power, including the diplomatic alliances upon which the United States depended for its grand strategy of containing the Soviet Union. That such multilateral considerations are important in an age of rogue states, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the doctrine of preemption is illustrated by the ongoing debate in the Bush Administration concerning military action against Iraq.<sup>33</sup>

Such developments are also a reminder that terrorism will constitute just one part of an overall US grand strategy that must address a host of other threats ranging from the degradation of the environment to potential peer competitors. Nevertheless, the anti-terrorism issue will permeate and at times dominate the larger strategic effort. For example, allied support on this issue, not unlike that required during the Cold War, may cause the Bush Administration to make policy compromises and unexpected commitments on other issues that could range from the Kyoto Protocol on global warming and the inspection protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention to treaties concerning the International Criminal Court and a comprehensive nuclear test ban. At the same time the global war on terrorism may offer larger grand strategic opportunities, such as increased cooperation with the other great powers, most notably China and Russia in terms of WMD nonproliferation and cooperative threat reduction. And the renewed focus on homeland security will provide the potential to deal more effectively both conceptually and structurally with the international and domestic elements of US national security, increasingly intertwined since 1947.

Finally, efforts against terrorism will compel US grand strategists to take a long-term look at the effects of globalism. From the traditional American perspective, globalism naturally and inexorably furthered the three core US interests. The 9/11 attacks, however, demonstrate that it also produces international economic and psychological effects that can pit these core interests against each other. To combat this effect, an overall US grand strategy will have to address the problems of failed or failing states in nation-building terms that will require decades if

not generations to solve. This effort will also need to move beyond near-term coalition needs to gradual and increasing commitments to democracy and human rights in repressive regimes around the world. Above all, it will require selective US global engagement made possible by a mix of US preponderance and cooperative security that will allow a more effective integration of foreign and domestic national security issues emphasizing minimization of both cost and risk—all necessary to sustain US public support for another grand strategic vision of a protracted twilight struggle.

### *Form and Function*

Form and function can grow apart in governments as a result of historical change. Nowhere is this more evident than in Vienna, where the resplendent Hofburg continues to serve as the governmental edifice for a republic smaller than the state of Indiana. A similar trend appeared in the United States in the decade after the Cold War when an unwieldy mixture of departments and agencies designed after World War II for a vastly different world was enlisted in an ad hoc approach to key post-Cold War issues ranging from counter-proliferation and WMD defense to counter-terrorism and homeland defense. As a consequence, many of the new national security missions were, in Ashton Carter's description, "institutionally homeless,"<sup>34</sup> without clear authority, necessary resources, and appropriate accountability.

The events of 11 September 2001 confirmed that the foreign and domestic distinctions of the Cold War national security system could no longer apply to the evolving concept of national security in terms of structure, organization, and the interagency process. Homeland security, for example, emerged as a blur of domestic and international requirements united only by the fact that the requirements could not be met by one organizational entity alone and that many of the players would be agencies not normally involved in national security issues, such as the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture. At the same time, it became abundantly clear that issues such as catastrophic terrorism could straddle the Cold War divide between the governmental organizations devoted to counter- ing foreign threats and those focused on combating domestic crime and protecting civil rights. That divide is deeply etched as two different institutional paradigms into the American governmental structure. The paradigm of national security, represented by the creation of the CIA in 1947, requires the aggressive, active collection and analysis of foreign intelligence to forewarn the appropriate authorities *before* an incident occurs. The law enforcement paradigm, represented by the continuing domestic role of the FBI, concerns reaction to voluntarily provided information *after* a crime in order to facilitate apprehension and prosecution in court based on rules of evidence and with the overarching consideration of protecting the rights of citizens. As a result, both agencies traditionally have been reluctant to exchange information—the CIA because sources and methods might be revealed in court, and the FBI because informant information might be revealed, compromising future action.<sup>35</sup>

The Bush Administration responded immediately to these types of problems in the wake of the terrorist attacks. On 20 September 2001, the President selected Tom Ridge as the director of a small Office of Homeland Security within the White House. This proved to be unworkable in most estimations, since Ridge lacked authority over the agencies concerned and their budgets. Consequently, President Bush proposed on 6 June 2002 the creation of a Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security to unite essential agencies in what he termed “the most extensive reorganization of the federal government since the 1940s.” The new agency would absorb a huge part of the Executive Branch, including all of the Coast Guard, Secret Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Customs Service, and the Transportation Security Administration, the new organization in charge of airport security. This would comprise 169,000 employees and incorporate \$37.4 billion from the existing agencies. The FBI and CIA would maintain their current functions, but the new department’s Intelligence and Threat Analysis unit would be “a customer” of both agencies. The purpose of the proposal, the President emphasized, was not to replace the earlier national security structure, but to build upon it to align governmental form and function. “Truman’s reforms are still helping us to fight terror abroad,” he concluded. “And now we need similar dramatic reforms to secure our people at home.”<sup>36</sup>

This evolutionary approach to the national security structure poses form and function problems for the US military. Abroad, the transformation process of the American armed forces is increasingly shaped by the new focus on terrorism and the need for offensive capabilities sufficient to mount preemptive attacks on terrorist groups and to provide a credible deterrent to rogue states linked to WMD support of such groups. At the same time, the requirement for the military to perform across a broad operational spectrum has not disappeared, particularly in terms of peace operations in areas vital to long-term solutions for the causes of terrorism. Problems with military overextension abroad are accentuated at home by evolving security requirements. Already, defensive measures for critical homeland infrastructure have made inroads into reserve component personnel and units destined for overseas missions. Such problems could be compounded by new domestic terrorist attacks, which at the very least could cause more US troops to be assigned to Northern Command, the new unified command established for homeland defense. At the most, such attacks might trigger a fundamental examination of more extensive domestic military support to civil authorities, unshackled by *Posse Comitatus*.<sup>37</sup>

In any event, the sweeping proposals of the Bush plan are likely to cause months of critical discussion and turf battles. Currently, 88 congressional committees and subcommittees have jurisdiction over some aspects of homeland security, and the new department will incorporate parts of eight major agencies. Moreover, consolidation does not automatically mean effective integration. The Department of Energy is a classic example of an agency created (in 1979) to bring



a variety of governmental offices under its control; after almost 25 years it still is criticized for its ineffectiveness. Compounding the normal complications associated with mergers, half the federal work force may be eligible for retirement in the next five years.<sup>38</sup> Under such circumstances, it will be difficult to facilitate a common culture oriented on homeland security in the way the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act institutionalized the concept of jointness. Finally, critics point out that the proposed structure does not address the problem of information-sharing between the FBI and the CIA, and that the new organization will still depend on these and other governmental agencies for much of its intelligence and enforcement capability.<sup>39</sup>

All this notwithstanding, the proposed Department of Homeland Security is a positive move to align national form and function. Seventy percent of all corporate mergers end in “outright failures.”<sup>40</sup> But whereas those results create only disappointed stockholders, the failure of the Bush Administration’s homeland security super-merger could have a devastating impact on the core US physical security interest and thereby on a continued American grand strategy based on global engagement. To beat the private-sector odds, the government must impart to Congress and the American people a sense of urgency, grand strategic design, and, above all, flexibility. In 1947, Eberstadt and Forrestal realized that organizing for national security was a dynamic process. They expected the national security state to undergo continued adjustment and in fact were responsible for the major 1949 reorganization. Similar changes will occur as the Administration responds to critics and to the lessons of 9/11. Institutional arrangements, as Alexander Pope long ago pointed out, can adjust in a pragmatic manner:

For forms of government let fools contest  
Whate’er is best administered is best

## **Conclusion**

“Do not confuse *sécurité*, the feeling of having nothing to fear,” the author of the *Larousse Modern Dictionary* warns in a different context, “and *sûreté*, the state of having nothing to fear.”<sup>41</sup> In the wake of 9/11, this presents no problem. For the American public, both elements have virtually disappeared. Because of the terrorist attacks, the institutional form of the US government is changing as America sorts out its grand strategic functions in a rapidly changing world. This should come as no surprise. The same process occurred at the beginning of the Cold War when the United States enlarged its definition of national security. But at that time it required a ten-year period encompassing an iterative public and political process for the American grand strategy of containment to be elaborated and broadly accepted. The United States has no such luxury today. “The danger of weapons of mass destruction being used against America and its allies,” a group of high-level analysts concluded even before 9/11, “is greater now than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.”<sup>42</sup>



Like the period 1945-50, the US response to this threat is ushering in a new era of national security that over the coming five years will affect the next two generations of Americans in political, economic, and socio-psychological ways that are not yet fully apparent. In those early years of the Cold War, American leaders fashioned a grand strategic vision of the US role in the world, which while innovative in terms of a changing concept of national security, did not outrun the experiences of the American people as the Soviet threat unfolded. US leaders face a similar challenge today as they seek to educate the public that the domestic terrorist threat to physical security should not be allowed to skew the overall American grand strategy of global engagement designed to further that core interest as well as those of economic prosperity and value promotion. The key is to structure government for this effort so that the foreign and domestic efficacy and effectiveness of form and function are clear to the American people. The new threat assures the continued existence if not growth of the national security state and will certainly cause increased centralization and intrusiveness of the US government. Nevertheless, the Cold War demonstrates that all this need not cause the rise of a garrison state or the diminishment of civil liberties. Above all, that long twilight struggle is a reminder of the importance of patience, perseverance, and endurance in the face of protracted conflict without the prospect of clear victory.

#### NOTES

1. Jasper Ridley, *Lord Palmerston* (London: Constable, 1970), p. 334.
2. The US Army War College uses the four broad categories outlined in Donald Neuchterlein, *America Overcommitted: U.S. National Interests in the 1980s* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1985), which includes "world order." Terry Deibel, "Strategies Before Containment: Patterns for the Future," *International Security*, 16 (Spring 1992), 82, points out, however, that national interests at the highest strategic level determine ends not means and that favorable world order is a means not an end.
3. Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 194. Madison also cautioned, in words with great applicability in an era of the new threat of terrorism, that the "means of security can only be regulated by the means and danger of attack. They will, in fact, ever be determined by these rules and no others." James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (London: Penguin Classics, 1987), p. 67.
4. It was not until World War II that the term "national security" came into full usage in US political discourse. In 1943, Walter Lippmann argued that peace as an ideal combined with a long history of "unearned security . . . caused us. . . to argue like the idle rich who regarded work as something for menials, that a concern with the foundations of *national security* . . . was beneath our dignity" (emphasis added). Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1943), p. 49.
5. Yergin, p. 195.
6. Ibid., p. 199. See also Edward Mead Earle, "Introduction," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, ed. Edward Mead Earle (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1943), p. viii; as early as 1943 he pointed out that national security strategy "has of necessity required increasing consideration of nonmilitary factors, economic, psychological, moral, political, and technological. Strategy, therefore, is not merely a concept of wartime, but is an inherent element of statecraft at all times."
7. Ernest R. May, "National Security in American History," in *Rethinking America's Security: Beyond Cold War to a New World Order*, ed. Graham Allison and Gregory F. Treverton (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), p. 99. See also Yergin, pp. 196, 199.
8. Much of the FY 1950 (July 1949-June 1950) budget was due to obligations remaining from World War II. Ernest R. May, "The U.S. Government, a Legacy of the Cold War," in *The End of the Cold War: Its Meaning and Implications*, ed. Michael Hogan (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), p. 222, see also p. 219. On the issue of State and Defense conceptions of national security, see Melvyn P. Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-1948," *American Historical Review*, 89 (April 1984), 346-81, and in the same issue the "Comments" by John Lewis Gaddis, 382-85, and by Bruce Kuniholm, 385-90.

9. Emphasis in original. Colin S. Gray, "Strategy in the Nuclear Age: The United States, 1945-1991," in *The Making of Strategy, Rulers, States, and War*, ed. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), p. 599. For Kennan's prediction of this trend toward militarization of the national security concept, see George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 171-75.
10. Yergin, p. 220; see also pp. 200-01, 219.
11. My thanks for discussion and insight on this definition to Ambassador Marshall McCallie, Deputy Commandant for International Affairs, US Army War College, who co-taught an elective on grand strategy, and to those members of the US Army War College Class of 2002 who participated in the elective.
12. For the cost-risk patterns throughout the Cold War, see John Lewis Gaddis, "Containment and the Logic of Strategy," *The National Interest*, No. 10 (Winter 1987/1988), pp. 27-38.
13. John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press 1982), pp. 352-53.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.
15. "NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," 14 April 1950, in *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, ed. Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1978), p. 401.
16. Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The Chance for Peace," Washington, D.C., 16 April 1953.
17. Aaron L. Friedberg, "Why Didn't the United States Become a Garrison State?" *International Security*, 16 (Spring 1992), 117.
18. US Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, *Report to HON James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy on Unification of the War and Navy Departments and Postwar Organization for National Security, 22 October 1945* (hereinafter Eberstadt Report), 79th Cong., 1st sess., 1945, pp. 1-2, 6-14, 16-18, 21, 36-37, 150-52, 163, 181. The two men met in 1909 while they were attending Princeton and later worked together in Dillon, Read, and Company. Jeffery M. Dorwart, *Eberstadt and Forrestal: A National Security Partnership* (College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 12, 22. See also Paul Y. Hammond, *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 203-13. "National Security Council" was substituted for "Council of Common Defense" in the Senate (S.758) and House (HR. 2319) bills that incorporated President Truman's February 1947 formal proposal of legislation to Congress. On the influence of corporatist thought, see Dorwart, pp. 29, 104-05. Instead of a consolidated, military system of national security with an emphasis on government control, the Eberstadt Report emphasized that with coordinating agencies there would be "tremendous benefits that arise from the parallel, competitive, and sometime conflicting efforts which our system permits." Eberstadt Report, p. 20.
19. US Congress, *National Security Act of 1947* (Public Law 253, 80th Congress, 26 July 1947) (61 Stat. 495). See also Marcus G. Raskin, *Essays of a Citizen: From National Security State to Democracy* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1991), p. 10; MacGregor Knox, "Conclusion: Continuity and Revolution in the Making of Strategy," in *The Making of Strategy*, p. 620; Gregory F. Treverton and Barbara A. Bicksler, "Conclusion: Getting from Here to Where?" in *Rethinking America's Security*, p. 49; Yergin, p. 219; and Ernest R. May, "Cold War and Defense," in *The Cold War and Defense*, ed. Keith Neilson and Ronald G. Hay (New York: Praeger, 1990), pp. 28-35. Dorwart (p.145) wrote, "In reality the National Security Act was the Eberstadt plan with modifications." On Truman's major philosophical and organizational differences with the concepts in the Eberstadt Report and the politics of the report's acceptance, see Dorwart, ch. 7.
20. In 1949, only 7 percent of the more than 10,000 pages of *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) was located in sections with titles concerning the words "security" or "military." In 1951, for the 13,000 pages of the FRUS, the figure was 28 percent. May, "U.S. Government," pp. 226-27. See also Treverton and Bicksler, p. 408.
21. May, "U.S. Government," p. 227. From the early 1960s, a growing portion of American national strategic planning efforts was devoted to military strategy. Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Making of American National Strategy, 1948-1988," *The National Interest*, No. 11 (Spring 1988), p. 73; Samuel P. Huntington, *American Military Strategy*, Policy Papers in International Affairs, No. 28 (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1986), p. 28; and "The Evolution of U.S. National Strategy," in *U.S. National Security Strategy for the 1990s*, ed. Daniel J. Kaufman, David S. Clark, and Kevin P. Sheehan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991), p. 12.
22. May, "U.S. Government," p. 227; Yergin, p. 408; Friedberg, "Why Didn't the United States Become a Garrison State?" pp. 110-11.
23. Chris Seiple, "Homeland Security Concepts and Strategy," *Orbis*, 46 (Spring 2002), 264-65; Ashton B. Carter, "The Architecture of Government in the Face of Terrorism," *International Security*, 26 (Winter 2001/2002), 8; and Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, 79 (January/February 2000), 45-62.
24. National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century* (hereinafter NDP, *Transforming Defense*) (Washington: GPO, December 1997), pp. 25-28.
25. United States Commission on National Security/21st Century, *Road Map for National Security: Imperative for Change* (hereinafter USCNS/21, *Road Map for National Security*) (Washington: GPO, 15 March

2001), Phase III Report, p. xiii. See also the Commission's *New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century* (hereinafter USCNS/21, *New World Coming*) (Washington: GPO, 15 September 1999), Phase I Report, and *Seeking a National Strategy: A Concert for Preserving Security and Promoting Freedom* (hereinafter USCNS/21, *Seeking a National Strategy*) (Washington: GPO, 15 April 2000), Phase II Report. In response to such warnings, the 1999 Clinton Administration's National Security Strategy addressed combating terrorism and devoted an entire section to "Defending the Homeland," which discussed such topics as domestic preparedness against WMD and critical infrastructure protection. William Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington: GPO, December 1999), pp. 13, 16-18.

26. Richard K. Betts, "The New Threat of Mass Destruction," *Foreign Affairs*, 77 (January/February 1998), 41. See also Adam Garfinkel, "NSC-68 Redux?" *SAIS Review*, 19 (Winter-Spring 1999), 41-54.

27. Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security*, 21 (Winter 1996/97), 5, 52.

28. For example, see Francois Heisbourg, "American Hegemony? Perceptions of the U.S. Abroad," *Survival*, 41 (Winter 1999-2000), 5-19; Peter W. Rodman, "The World's Resentment: Anti-Americanism as a Global Phenomenon," *National Interest*, No. 60 (Summer 2000), pp. 33-41; and Chalmer A. Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Metropolitan, 2000).

29. Betts, pp. 27-28, 40; Barry R. Posen, "The Struggle Against Terrorism: Grand Strategy, Strategy, and Tactics," *International Security*, 26 (Winter 2001/2002), 53; Joseph Nye, "The New Rome Meets the New Barbarians," *The Economist*, 21 May 2002, pp. 23-25; and Stephen M. Walt, "Beyond bin Laden: Reshaping U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Security*, 26 (Winter 2001/2002), 74.

30. Etzold and Gaddis, *Containment*, p. 390. See also Frederick W. Kagan, "Back to the Future: NSC-68 and the Right Course for America Today," *SAIS Review*, 19 (Winter-Spring 1999), 390.

31. Walt, p. 62, and John G. Ikenberry, "American Grand Strategy in the Age of Terror," *Survival*, 43 (Winter 2001), 31.

32. Ikenberry, pp. 20, 25, 28; Walt, p. 63; and Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, "A War Nasty, Brutish and Long," *Current History*, 100 (December 2001), 404-05.

33. Daalder and Lindsay, p. 408, and Michael Howard, "What's in a Name? How to Fight Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs*, 81 (January/February 2002), 10. But see Eliot A. Cohen, "A Strange War," *The National Interest*, No. 65-S (Thanksgiving 2001), pp. 11-22. "When we were attacked on [Sept. 11]," National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice remarked, "it reinforced one of the rediscovered truths about today's world: robust military power matters in international politics and security." At the same time, Rice pointed out the need for a concerted response using all elements of power by a coalition of like-minded nations in response to the basic fact that "global terror demands a global solution." Keith J. Costa, "National Security Adviser Outlines Lessons Learned from Sept. 11," *Inside the Pentagon*, 2 May 2002, p. 11.

34. Ashton B. Carter, "Keeping the Edge: Managing Defense for the Future," in *Keeping the Edge: Managing Defense for the Future*, ed. Ashton B. Carter and John P. White (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), p. 2.

35. John Deutch and Jeffrey H. Smith, "Smarter Intelligence," *Foreign Policy*, No. 128 (January/February 2002), p. 64; Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry with David Aidekman, "Countering Asymmetric Threats," in *Keeping the Edge*, p. 125; John Deutch, Arnold Kanter, and Brent Scowcroft with Christopher Hornbarger, "Strengthening the National Security Interagency Process," in *Keeping the Edge*, p. 266; Seiple, p. 263; and Ashton Carter, John Deutch, and Philip Zelikow, "Catastrophic Terrorism: Tackling the New Danger," *Foreign Affairs*, 77 (November/December 1998), 82.

36. "Bush Speech on New Department," *The Washington Post*, 7 June 2002, p. A-19. See also, in the same issue, Dan Balz, "A Bid to Regain the Initiative," p. A-1, and Mike Allen and Bill Miller, "Bush Seeks Security Department," pp. A-1, A-18; also see Carter, "Architecture of Government," p. 12. For the entire Administration approach, see George W. Bush, *The National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Washington: Office of Homeland Security, July 2002).

37. Conrad C. Crane, *Facing the Hydra: Maintaining Strategic Balance While Pursuing a Global War Against Terrorism* (Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, May 2002), pp. 7-17; and Hunter Keeter, "New DoD Plan Links NORAD, New Northern Command," *Defense Daily International*, 19 April 2002, p. 1.

38. Examples of eligibility to retire by 2007: FEMA, 48 percent; Coast Guard, 42 percent; and Customs Service, 36 percent. Max Stier, "Homeland Security: Mega Merger," *The Washington Post*, 25 June 2002, p. A-19. See also Carter, "Architecture of Government," p. 10, and Daalder and Lindsay, pp. 405-06.

39. Thomas E. Ricks, "A Question of Implementation," *The Washington Post*, 7 June 2002, pp. A-1, A-18. On institutional culture, see Seiple, p. 271, and USCNS/21, *Road Map for National Security*, p. 102, which recommends a National Security Service Corps for senior civil servants.

40. Stier, p. A-19.

41. Marguerite-Marie Dubois, *Larousse Modern Dictionary* (Paris: Librarie Larousse, 1960), p. 657.

42. Carter, Deutch, and Zelikow, p. 81.